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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

By the Rev.

R. J. CAMPBELL, D.D.

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus of Nazareth is by general consent the greatest being who has ever lived in this world if we have regard to the profound and lasting effects he has produced. This is a view which would be conceded by all or nearly all educated people, whether they agree with the traditional teachings of the Christian Church on the subject or not; many do not. It is the view taken for granted by the great majority of people who dwell within the orbit of Western civilization, though but few have received the training necessary for forming an enlightened judgment on the historical, moral, social, and psychological problems involved. It would not be inaccurate to say that Jesus has had more to do with the making of this civilization than any other personal force.

There is no one to place beside him in this respect or any other; he stands alone. The nearest approach to him in the nature of the influence he has exerted is Gautama the Buddha, and yet no sooner have we made the comparison than we become conscious of immense differences between the two masters of men. Both gave a rule of life to their followers, but that of Jesus is as positive as that of the founder of Buddhism is negative, and this difference is reflected in the quality of the individual character and the corporate life of which they have been respectively the inspiration. And Jesus gave much more than a rule of life, a fact which should neither be forgotten nor ignored in any attempt to understand him. He is to-day a living reality to millions of people less because of what he taught than of what he was. We may indeed reasonably affirm that it is what he was that constitutes the

chief subject-matter of the fascinating study of Christian origins. It is the greatest mystery of all time and the most alluring. We cannot explain Jesus in terms of ordinary everyday human experience.

But can we be sure of knowing very much about him as an actual historical figure apart altogether from the position he occupies as the object of Christian faith and worship? We are able to give an affirmative answer to this question to-day with more confidence than inquirers of a generation ago, for of late years much valuable and illuminating work has been done in this field, the results of which are now within the reach of everyone. Twenty years ago a certain school of critics challenged the belief that Jesus had lived at all, or, if he had, that any positive information about him was obtainable. The Christ Myth controversy, as it was called, gave some added impetus to expert scrutiny of the earliest available records of his sayings and doings, and we are safe in saying that no scholar of the first rank now doubts the reliability of the main facts of this unique life as preserved and described in the pages of the New Testament. With the interpretation of those facts we are on more debatable ground.

The following chapters are an attempt to expound and justify without prejudice this general statement.

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE STORY TOLD BY THE FIRST CHRISTIAN PREACHERS

NINETEEN centuries ago the little land of Palestine, which to-day is administered by Great Britain under a mandate from the League of Nations, formed part of the Roman Empire. In accordance with Roman policy, a considerable amount of local autonomy was permitted to the native inhabitants, who were less of a mixed race then than they are now. This would be specially true of the southern or Judæan portion of the country, which was almost homogeneously Jewish in race and religion. It was less true of the district of Samaria in the centre, where dwelt a remnant of the population of the former kingdom of northern Israel, but a remnant which had not preserved the purity of the aboriginal stock nor been as strict in the observance of the forms of the ancient faith as their kinsfolk who worshipped at the Temple in Jerusalem. There was indeed much animosity between Samaritans and Jews on this account, the Jews having refused to allow the Samaritans to share with them in worship or in anything else. The reason given for this exclusion was the not unnatural one that the Samaritans had intermarried with unbelievers and were not faithful to the precepts of the Mosaic Law. Farther north was a province, Galilee, to which this objection did not apply in the same

degree. Citizens of Jerusalem regarded the Galileans as rustics, but did not question their right to be included with the seed of Abraham and reckoned as partakers in the covenanted benefits supposed to pertain to the Jewish nation as the chosen of God. Galileans, in common with Jews in more distant parts of the empire, were accustomed to come up to Jerusalem at stated seasons to take part in national religious feasts and offer sacrifice at the one national shrine.

The most important of these seasons was held to be the Feast of the Passover, so called because it celebrated annually the deliverance of the remote ancestors of the Israelitish people from a period of slavery in the land of Egypt and the beginning of their history as in a unique sense a people with a religious vocation. Jerusalem was always crowded during this feast and for a few days before and after, just as Rome is now at Eastertide. The numerous visitors other than Palestinian residents were mostly pilgrims of Jewish race who journeyed from various parts of the empire to perform what they believed to be a sacred duty.

On one such occasion great excitement had been caused by the arrest, trial, and summary execution of a wandering Galilean preacher named Jesus, or Joshua. He had entered publicly into the city a few days before and been enthusiastically welcomed by a great concourse of people to whom his personality and work were known. There were others who did not know him; these were probably Jews whose homes were elsewhere than in Palestine, men and women from all parts of Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, and not a few, perhaps, from Rome itself. In answer to their eager questioning as to who this public character could be who was received with such acclamation, his followers replied: "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

The Temple authorities were opposed to him, how-

ever, as were also the most influential leaders of the chief orthodox religious party. We need not at the moment inquire why this was so beyond observing that he had severely criticised both. Being determined to get him out of the way, they had him quietly arrested at night by the Temple police and brought before the hurriedly convened council called the Sanhedrin. By this body he was condemned, but as no sentence of death could be carried out without the approval of the resident Roman governor, this had somehow to be obtained. It was obtained on the utterly false plea that the prisoner had been actively engaged in fomenting rebellion against Roman overlordship and was himself a pretender to the throne. This was enough, and in accordance with the cruel Roman military custom, the victim of this malicious and hypocritical procedure was barbarously flogged and then crucified.

Crucifixion was only too terribly common at that time and place, and this Galilean prophet was not alone in having to endure it. Two bandits were crucified along with him, but as the torture was sometimes protracted for days before a sufferer on the Roman gibbet expired, these two men had to be killed by having their bones broken in order that the coming feast should not be polluted by the spectacle of criminals in their last agonies. Jesus was not subjected to this violence. He was already dead, after having hung for several hours on the cross; the terrible ill-usage to which he had been exposed continuously for many hours beforehand had, we may assume, so weakened his vitality that he succumbed earlier than the others. As the feast was to begin at sunset, and it was already late afternoon, his body was taken down from the cross and hastily interred, without the usual unguents, in a sort of cave tomb belonging to a citizen of some standing who must have been one of his undeclared friends.

This, as far as everyone knew who took any interest in the matter at all, was the end of a wretched business. A petty and squalid plot had succeeded, as similar plots have succeeded in the world's history before and since, and an inconvenient agitator had been removed from the path of powerful and unscrupulous men who had their own interests to serve. Cupidity, jealousy, and fanaticism had prevailed over simple honesty and truth. The Feast of the Passover went on undisturbed; those at the head of affairs gave no more heed to the propaganda they had feared, now that the source of it had been so contemptuously disposed of; the general public, as is its wont, had little thought to spare for a tragic failure. True, there had been some small rumour that the murdered prophet had been heard of again, but what sensible person would pay any attention to that? No one who had seen a lacerated human body drooping lifeless on a cross would ever be likely to imagine its resuscitation.

But about seven weeks afterwards a most extraordinary thing happened. Jerusalem was crowded again for yet another popular feast, this time the great Feast of Pentecost. It is said that Jews were there "from every nation under heaven" just as for the Feast of the Passover. Suddenly the news went round among these that a company of Galileans was behaving in a manner which bystanders could make nothing of. People were rushing from every quarter to look at and listen to them. There were about a hundred and twenty of them, and among the number could be recognised some of the former followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole hundred and twenty might come under this designation, but there were a few individuals plainly marked out from the rest as having been constantly seen along with the crucified teacher before he fell into the hands of his enemies. They had promptly disappeared after his death, and no one seems to have thought them of sufficient im-

portance to be worth apprehending. But here they were again; and what were they saying? The story they had to tell sounded incredible. They were in such a state of exaltation that some onlookers said they were drunk. More than that, by some unheard-of facility they were able to make themselves understood in other tongues than their own rough Galilean dialect. But whether this statement is to be taken literally or not, there is no room for doubt that a great impression was produced by one speaker among these hundred and twenty, a fisherman of Capernaum named Simon—afterwards more generally known as Peter—who spoke in the name of all the rest. We are not told what the others said, but we have a short report of what he said, and he stated there and then that they all had the same story to tell. Jesus was alive, he declared. That stupendous fact was the reason why these hundred and twenty Galileans were there in Jerusalem at all. The exuberance of spirit they were exhibiting, and which had driven them out into the open with their tidings, a supernormal state of joyous confidence, was the direct result, not of drunkenness or any other earthly influence, but of something wrought by one whom the grave had not been able to hold. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

He was careful not to leave his hearers in the dark as to the nature and significance of the phenomenon before them. This small fellowship, consisting of disciples of the slain Nazarene, was under the domination of a special outpouring of the Spirit of God which had been foretold by former prophets of Israel and definitely promised by Jesus himself while still among them.

Most of those present probably knew something of Jesus at first hand. This untutored fisherman from the north seems to have taken as much for granted in the terms of his discourse, for he spoke as though thev

were well acquainted with the details of what had taken place in Jerusalem less than two months before and had a certain corporate responsibility for the murder of God's greatest messenger. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

No Jew in the audience would be under any misapprehension as to what this meant. It did not merely mean that the body of Jesus was still lying in the rock-hewn sepulchre, where it had been interred after it had been taken down from the cross on Passover eve, and that his spirit survived and was still at work in the world. Jews did not think in that way, though Greeks might. This was more than a question of the survival of the soul after death; it was a question of whether the actual body that had hung on Calvary between two thieves had come forth from the grave and been seen again by mortal eyes. There has been much argument since on this point, especially in modern times. It has been thought that perhaps the original members of the Christian Church were mistaken about the manner of their master's return from the dead. Perhaps they only saw a ghost after all, or perhaps they were convinced in some equally impressive but less bizarre way that cruelty and hate had not had the last word, and that Jesus lived in heaven.

But this was not what the preacher maintained, not at all; he made his announcement as explicit as it could be made. King David, he went on to argue, had said something in days gone by about a Holy One whose flesh was not to see corruption. Well, that could not have been David himself, for David had been

dead and buried for a thousand years and the place of his sepulture in that very neighbourhood was well known to all. But here was one of whom the words attributed to David had been proved to be literally true. Jesus had died a violent death, and been buried as other people were buried, but he had not remained dead and buried, nor had his spirit merely passed away from earth to a happier state in a world invisible; his maltreated corpse had returned to life unscathed. Jesus had lived again in this world, though not for long; these hundred and twenty people and others had seen him at close quarters and held intercourse with him again; they were here in Jerusalem to testify to that astounding experience and other things arising from it; they would not have been here otherwise; they were here because this was their work; it was by command of their risen leader that they had come.

Note that so far nothing had been asserted in this famous address about the status of Jesus in relation to God. Not a man there but believed in God, the God of Israel in whom their fathers trusted and for whose intervention on behalf of an oppressed people all good and pious Jews were still hoping. Jesus is described as a man approved of God, and also as a prophet. But now a more daring affirmation is made, and made with dramatic emphasis. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ."

This was startling; but in order to understand how startling we must put ourselves in the place of the people who first heard the declaration made. If we were hearing it now for the first time, we might require to have the terms "Lord" and "Christ" carefully explained before it would make much impression upon us. This is what has to be done by Christian missionaries when they carry the gospel to

heathen races who are totally unacquainted with the religion in which we have been trained from our youth up, and which his been that of our forbears for many generations. But inhabitants of Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago were in a different position both from ourselves and from the heathen world of to-day, in that they knew, or thought they knew, quite well what Lord and Christ meant before they knew anything about Jesus. Scholars are still discussing the question as to how much was implied in calling Jesus Lord as the early Christians did. Did it mean that he was divine or not? We should probably wander wide of the mark if we were to attempt to define the term too closely as employed by this unsophisticated fisherman preacher in addressing an open-air assemblage in Jerusalem at the beginning of our era; the time for exact doctrinal definition was not yet come. Here was a tremendous living experience which had to be accounted for; here was something to be told about a person of overwhelming significance, not only for the speaker and his friends, but for the rest of the world; and the first word that rose to Peter's lips as an approximately adequate title for this person was "Lord." It plainly meant that the risen Jesus, wherever he was at the moment, and whatever he might be in relation to God, was supreme over human destinies; he was to be judge of quick and dead. The future belonged to him; he would be the means whereby God's will would ultimately be realised in the entire visible creation.

The word "Christ" would be still more readily understood by Peter's hearers. When we hear it to-day we can do no other than associate it at once with the name of Jesus of Nazareth; we cannot think of the two apart. But it was otherwise with citizens of Jerusalem at the period under review. For them the term "Christ" had already had a long history and was linked in their minds with the expectation of a

good time coming. Peter may not have actually used the word "Christ" on the occasion specified, or he may; there is no certainty about the matter. It was the Greek equivalent of the Jewish term "Messiah"—literally "the anointed one." There is reason to believe that, as we now know that the Greek in which the New Testament is written was the common medium of intercourse between people of different races in the Near East at the time, Peter might quite well have said Christ instead of Messiah in the sentence above quoted; but, whether or no, the tremendous nature of the assertion he was making was clear enough to the crowd. The crucified Jesus was none other than the long-expected Messiah, God's vicegerent upon earth. If this were true, more would be heard of it, and there was cause for fear, for the killing of Jesus was more than an ordinary crime.

Where the idea of Messiahship came from it would be hard to say. It had had a firm place in the national consciousness of Israel for generations before what we now call Christianity began. Strictly speaking, Christianity is Messianity, the cult or news of the Messiah. To an orthodox Jew of the apostolic age it was a hope and nothing more. Inspired men had long been saying that a time would come when God would intervene mightily in human affairs to put everything right for his people. The appointed instrument of this drastic purging and reconstitution of things mundane was to be the Messiah. Various and conflicting views were current concerning the identity and functions of this mysterious being. Some thought of him as merely a divinely endowed man, a great national leader, such as had more than once appeared already in Israelitish history, who would command armies, drive out the foreign oppressor, and achieve the independence of his country. Of course, it was believed that the Messiah would be a greater deliverer than any previous national hero, greater even than King David himself,

who up till then had been regarded as the most outstanding figure in the short-lived greatness of Israel as an independent people. Successive generations had idealised David's reign, looking back to it wistfully as the hour of Israel's highest glory and prosperity. There was some ground for this feeling; Israel had enjoyed an autonomy and security under David and his son Solomon which had never been hers afterwards, though the territory over which David ruled had never been more than a petty principality at the best. Somehow, however, the personality of David and the kingdom of David became a cherished memory with all patriotic Jews. They longed to see the kingdom of David restored with added power and splendour under the rule of a prince of David's line. Hence it was that many of those who heard Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost believed with all their hearts that the Messiah, when he came, would be a new and greater David, a true descendant of David, and that the kingdom over which he would reign with Jerusalem as its capital would be the best the world had seen, a kingdom of happiness, justice, and peace, a veritable Kingdom of God.

Not all people thought of the Messiah and his work in this way. We have no certain data as to what proportion of the inhabitants of Palestine nineteen centuries ago believed intensely in the coming of the Messiah at all; there is no evidence that the ruling orders took the Messianic hope very seriously, but more ordinary folk appear to have done so in great numbers. Pretenders to Messiahship had headed more than one insurrection, and there were others to follow. With the generality of people, perhaps, the expectation went no further than the dream that at some time in the not distant future God would send them a champion who would avenge them on their enemies and give Israel the kind of hegemony over the rest of the world that was now possessed by imperial Rome.

There were some, perhaps not very many, who took a more spiritual view than this. To these the Messiah, when he came, was to be, before all things, the revealer of God, the fulfilment and consummation of all that the prophets and holy men of old had dreamed concerning a spiritual dispensation to come. It is to this that Peter makes allusion in his sermon: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Persons who thought like this were looking rather for a moral than for a political renewal, and there is good reason to suppose that it was from these that the members of the original Christian Church were recruited.

A curious and interesting popular literature was in circulation at the time, some portions of which have come down to us, whose contents show that some people had begun to think of the Messiah as a superhuman being, a Man from Heaven, rather than merely a divinely chosen member of the Jewish race. It is known as Apocalyptic. We may have more to say of this literature later on, for it throws some light on what Jesus himself is reported to have thought and said about his mission to mankind. All that is needful to note at the point we have reached is that Peter and the little company of followers of Jesus, who all bore the same witness, took a deeply religious view of the importance of their conviction that their risen Master was both Lord and Christ. They did not as yet explicitly affirm his pre-existence nor his divinity, but simply that through him was salvation to come to the world. No mention was made of political deliverance, but something was said about the return of Jesus in judgment. Repentance and remission of sins

were to be preached in his name until, as the same preacher said in a further discourse, "the times of restitution of all things." And the sum of the new message was: "Unto you first God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

This, in brief, was the story told by the men who first proclaimed the Christian gospel. It was the story of the resurrection of a crucified religious teacher from the dead, conjoined to the assurance that this person was none other than the saviour of mankind. What this stupendous claim implied in the minds of those who made it, and what foundation there was for it, we shall proceed to inquire.

CHAPTER II

THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

It is clear from what has been said up to this point that Christianity as a power in the world began with the all but incredible tale of a grave giving up its dead. In all reasonable probability we should never have heard of Jesus of Nazareth but for that tale and its immediate consequences. It is said that the first of these consequences was the addition of three thousand persons in one day to the original hundred and twenty who had been waiting in Jerusalem for the proper moment to begin the work of witnessing for the Messiahship of Jesus. Shortly afterwards two thousand more converts were added to the number. The tale carried credence.

Why did it do so? It must have been because of what it had already done for those who told it. They were changed men. If they had not been convinced beyond all possibility of error that they had seen and spoken with their master after he had been dead and buried they would not have dared to come out into the open with a tale like this. They had been re-energised, too, and lifted on to a plane of experience they had never touched before. They attributed this change to the power of the spirit of Jesus operating upon and through them. A recent psychologist has wisely said that it was the contagion of this experience which gained the first Christian preachers a hearing. Something new, distinctive, and exceedingly beautiful had come into the world in the quality of life exhibited by the men and women who had been with Jesus and believed themselves to be still in touch with him through the agency of what they called the Holy Spirit. They were utterly fearless and as utterly unworldly; they aimed at neither power, nor wealth, nor high position; they had ill-will to none, and their unselfish devotion to one another, and to the cause they had embraced, demonstrated itself in their acceptance of every risk and hardship.

So the testimony went on and gained adherents. The same story was repeated everywhere by followers of " the way " as it was called—that is, of the way of life that they had learned of Jesus. They told all they knew about Jesus, beginning always with the fontal fact of his resurrection. The main features of the story never varied, for it was circulated in an age and clime when people were trained to memorise the details of a narrative to a degree that we of the modern western world cannot emulate; the spread of the art of writing has weakened the power of retaining and reproducing with verbal accuracy things one has been taught.

How long it was before the story of Jesus or any

part of it began to be written down we do not know. He wrote nothing himself—nothing at least that has ever been heard of—though there is plenty of evidence that he could both read and write. Sir William Ramsay in his book, *The Education of Christ,* states that the Jewish youth of the period was the best educated in the world, and that Jesus shows himself to have possessed all the usual knowledge imparted in the synagogue schools to his Galilean contemporaries. The question was indeed asked on one occasion, according to what is reported in the fourth gospel: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" but if the incident be historical it is not recorded as showing that Jesus was regarded as surprising his hearers by being able to read; it was the extent of his knowledge of the Scriptures which surprised them.

There is a possibility that some of his words were written down during his lifetime. There is an early tradition that Matthew the apostle wrote a gospel in Hebrew, by which no doubt was meant Aramaic, the dialect spoken by the Galilean people to whom Jesus belonged. This Hebrew or Aramaic gospel attributed to Matthew could not have been the gospel which bears his name to-day, for the latter is written in Greek and is clearly not a translation from a Hebrew or Aramaic original.

What, then, has become of this Aramaic Matthew? for we have no right to suppose that it never existed. Is it entirely lost? On the contrary, there is reason for believing that we possess a great part if not the whole of it in the New Testament to-day. A distinguished scholar of the last generation, Professor A. B. Bruce, of Glasgow, put forward the interesting theory that Matthew the apostle probably took down some of the chief sayings of Jesus from the master's own lips, and that Jesus called him to his side for this specific purpose. Matthew being a tax-gatherer was, of course,

able to write with facility in the native tongue. Most of what Jesus said would be addressed to his neighbours in that tongue; it might all have passed away and been forgotten had not someone made a careful systematic record of the principal part of the teaching contained therein exactly as he heard it spoken. Who could the someone have been if not Matthew? There may have been others who occasionally did the same, as we shall see presently; but Matthew's document, or what we may assume to be Matthew's document, is the one chiefly relied upon by the writers of the first and third gospels for what they respectively give us of the teaching of Jesus as distinct from his other activities. At any rate, these two gospels, Matthew and Luke, and perhaps to some small extent Mark as well, draw upon a collection of the sayings of Jesus that must have been very early. It is known among scholars by the technical name of Q—that is, the initial letter of the German word *"Quelle,"* meaning "source." The great German scholar, Adolf von Harnack, has committed himself to the opinion that there is a reasonable possibility that Q is what remains of Matthew's compendium of the sayings of Jesus. One would like to think, and it is not a far-fetched supposition, that the eyes of Jesus may have rested on Matthew's record of his words.

The above hypothesis is strengthened by noting the variation between Luke's rendering of some of the famous sayings and the form in which they are given in the canonical Matthew. Supposing the original to have been in Aramaic, what more likely than that the translation into Greek would produce some minor discrepancies? The reader can easily trace these for himself as in the different versions of the beatitudes, for instance. A rough way of extracting the document Q from its background in the gospels is to take out of Matthew and Luke what both have in common with Mark; from the remainder eliminate what is peculiar

to each; what is left is Q. This is not a very accurate way of arriving at Q; a more exact method can be learned from Canon Streeter's important book, *The Four Gospels;* but the method suggested here is sufficient to give a good general idea of the content of Q. The reader will observe at once that, as Harnack says, it consists of pure spiritual teaching applicable to any and every age and amazingly free from local and racial prejudice or limitation of view. Again it may be remarked that this is a very valuable fact as throwing light upon the personality of Jesus if indeed we owe these deathless words to the conscientious report of them made by Matthew the apostle there and then as he heard the Galilean teacher utter them. It is more than likely that the original Q contained much more than finds a place in the New Testament. Some portions of it may have found their way into the oral tradition of different Christian centres, and fragments of these may thus have come down to us through extra-canonical channels. We shall mention a few of these in their place without advancing any theory as to their authenticity.

Granted that Q is the earliest stratum in the literary sources of our knowledge of the historical Jesus, the next in order of date would appear to be the letters of the intrepid missionary, St. Paul. Paul was the most notable convert made in the early days of Christianity. He had never seen Jesus in the flesh, or so we are led to infer from his writings, and he was at first strongly opposed to what he considered the blasphemous attribution of a superhuman dignity to one who had died a felon's death upon a cross; but later, through a sudden and mysterious psychological upheaval which he underwent, he became an ardent convert to the belief that Jesus really was the promised Messiah and something more. He journeyed over the principal part of the Roman empire proclaiming this view to Jew and Gentile alike. He says nothing, or

almost nothing, about the earthly life of Jesus, but he has left on record his own version of the story which, from the first Christian Pentecost onward, had been the basis of apostolic certitude concerning the new gospel. He says (1 Cor. xv. 3-8): "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve; after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

The concluding sentence of this quite clear and definite statement of facts relates to his own conversion and the supernatural vision he believed himself to have been received of the risen master. It does not occur to him that this experience of his is less evidential than the others he recounts, but to our way of thinking it falls within a different category. He had not seen Jesus in an earthly body either before or after the alleged resurrection; others had. But save in this particular he tells the same story as they. It begins with the tragedy of Calvary and the overwhelmingly awe-inspiring event, attested by the united witness of all the people he mentions, that the innocent victim of bigotry and wickedness had risen from the dead. That was the pivot upon which everything else turned, and Paul goes beyond his predecessors in the same field by declaring that in the light of the resurrection, not only is Jesus' Messiahship fully proved, but his divine status is revealed likewise; he is God as well as man.

This is a point not to be lost sight of. Paul is not at variance with his fellow-propagandists in what he

so daringly affirms concerning the person of Jesus, but he is more explicit and thorough in the statement of it. Many modern commentators upon the life of Jesus fail to take sufficient cognisance of the important fact that from the very first Jesus was preached as more than a man among men. The story of an empty tomb and a being whose visible presence had subsequently been withdrawn from the world otherwise than through the gate of death, had for its inevitable corollary that this was such a being as the world had never hitherto known. He was certainly human but no less certainly divine. We may not like the story or this deduction from it, but we cannot deny that this is what our records tell us; this is the view of Jesus of Nazareth with which the Christian community set out to evangelise the world.

Before long people, especially of non-Jewish race, began to want to know more about Jesus. What was his history before he was crucified; what was his parentage; where and in what surroundings was he born; was anything known of his childhood; who were his kindred? Evidently he had attracted great attention for a time in the land where he was put to death; what had he been doing and for how long? Could those who had been with him give some account of his habits and mode of life, and reveal what purpose, if any, governed his behaviour from first to last in the circumstances attending his brief career?

Not a few attempts were made to satisfy this very natural craving for information. The apostles, as the inner circle of the friends of Jesus were called, travelled about from place to place telling their story. They were looked upon as chief authorities on the matter to which they had devoted their lives, because they had been the close companions of Jesus, selected by himself to carry on his work. Peter especially exercised a certain undefined primacy among the rest and was as

active in his way as St. Paul. If he had had St. Paul's gift for writing, we should no doubt see that the Church owes no less to him than to the man who is commonly called the apostle of the Gentiles. That Peter was also an apostle to the Gentiles—that is, to the non-Jewish world—seems clear from the evidence of the New Testament itself, although until lately scholars have not allowed sufficient weight to this evidence. The interesting story in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles concerning the conversion and baptism of a Roman centurion named Cornelius is as well worthy of credence as anything else related by the same careful author. This author is Luke, " the beloved physician," who also wrote the gospel which bears his name and who, as his Greek name implies, must himself have been of Gentile origin. Luke was the companion and friend of St. Paul throughout a considerable part, and that not the least arduous, of Paul's experiences as a touring evangelist. When, therefore, Luke credits Peter, and not Paul, with having been the first to carry the gospel to Gentiles, we cannot fairly suspect him of exhibiting any bias in favour of the former at the expense of truth. The theory has been advanced by some scholars that the Cornelius episode was invented or exaggerated, in order to make it appear that Peter and Paul had all along taken the same view of the universality of the religion of Jesus and that the former was first in the field with the offer of the good tidings to persons who were neither of Jewish race nor of the Jewish faith. This is an unsound critical hypothesis. That Peter was more hesitant and less clear-sighted than Paul on the question may be freely admitted, as we see from Paul's letter to the Galatians, but there is no need to doubt Luke's accuracy in his report of events of which he knew at first hand. His reputation in this particular stands so high among students of the Christian sources at the present time that we must take him very seriously as

a first-hand authority for our knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth and his words and works.

Luke tells us at the beginning of the gospel which bears his name that many persons were already writing down the story of Jesus and matters connected therewith, "even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." He claims that he himself "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" had thought good to make a record of what he knew for the benefit of someone named Theophilus to whom he addresses his little book.

What has become of all these memoirs of Jesus to which he alludes we do not know, nor perhaps does it greatly matter. Little scraps of what are said to have been portions of the teaching of Jesus keep on coming to light here and there, such as the fragment discovered by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt in a rubbish heap in Upper Egypt, and there may be more yet to be unearthed; but nothing so far has added greatly to the information we already possess in the four gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John respectively. These have survived in all probability because they are better and more reliable than those that have been lost.

A few sayings of Jesus, perhaps culled from some of these lost memoirs, appear in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. They may be quite authentic. One of them is this: "In whatsoever I may find you, in this will I also judge you"—a saying that tones with some things attributed to Jesus in the gospels and appears to have been well known in early Christian circles. Another is, "Pray for great things, and little things will (also) be granted to you. Pray for heavenly blessings, and earthly ones will (also) be granted to you." Origen and Clement of Alexandria both quote this. A third, for which Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria are our authorities, is the arrest-

ing aphorism: "When thou sawest thy brother thou sawest thy God." Within the archway of a Mohammedan gate in India Dr. Rendel Harris saw inscribed the words: "Jesus, on whom be peace, has said, 'This world is merely a bridge; ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings on it.'" Best known of all perhaps is one of the sayings contained in the Egyptian fragment above mentioned: "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood and there am I"—the meaning apparently being that the spirit of Jesus is present in all faithful and honest work done in the service of man. All these sayings might be quite genuine, but they throw no fresh light on the personality and teaching of the master himself.

There are also apocryphal gospels, as they are called, but they are of little value. What we possess of these can now be studied in the collection of translations made by Dr. M. R. James, the Provost of Eton. To read them is only to become the more certain that what we have in the New Testament is more reliable than anything to be found outside of it for a true understanding of Jesus and his significance for mankind. The study of Christian origins is not an easy one; it abounds with difficulties; but there is none more interesting in the world, and it is one upon which an immensity of fresh light has been thrown in recent years by the painstaking labours of trained, expert investigators.

Following the hint given by Luke, what do we find? In the first place, it is established that he himself made use of some of the antecedent writings to which he refers. That he knew the collection of sayings of Jesus called Q we have already seen, but it is clear that he also knew Mark's gospel substantially in its present form. Canon Streeter, in the eighth chapter of his work on the Four Gospels mentioned above, maintains the hypothesis that Luke had already written

a complete gospel of his own before he became acquainted with and made use of Mark's. This earlier Luke may have been written about the same time as Mark's gospel, but draws extensively upon Q. Later on Luke incorporated—so thinks Canon Streeter—Mark's account of the ministry of Jesus with his own gospel. Other scholars, notably Dr. Vincent Taylor, have accepted and elaborated this interesting theory.

Virtually all scholars are agreed that St. Mark's gospel, as a connected record of the short public activity of Jesus, is the oldest gospel. The others draw upon it, but it does not draw upon them. It has one grave defect—namely, that the end has been lost; the original gospel ends with the eighth verse of chapter sixteen, stating the bare fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. The remaining verses of this chapter are a compilation by a later hand from the reports of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus given in the other three gospels. If we could discover the lost end of St. Mark we should be in possession of much valuable information about what happened between the first Christian Easter and the Day of Pentecost, for an ancient and quite reliable tradition affirms that the apostle Peter's reminiscences supplied Mark with the principal part of his material. It was at the house of Mark's mother in Jerusalem that the first Christian Church had its meeting place. In the First Epistle of St. Peter there is a reference to him as "Marcus, my son." His relations both with Peter and Paul appear to have been close, and there is good evidence that his gospel was written from Rome. The fact is now all but indisputable that Peter as well as Paul was martyred in Rome. In Mark's gospel, therefore, we have the story of Jesus, as told by the very man who first proclaimed the news of the resurrection of Jesus to an excited throng in Jerusalem at the beginning of the world movement now known as Christianity.

One of the foremost of living authorities on the

study of the gospels, Dr. Burkitt, thinks that the lost end of St. Mark's gospel must have been much more than a small fragment; he holds that there is ground for believing the lost portion to have amounted to no less than a third of the whole and to have covered all that is told in the others about the resurrection and after, up to the deliverance of Peter from prison, as recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts. Canon Streeter hazards what he calls a scientific guess that the lost end of this, the earliest gospel, is preserved in the latest, that attributed to St. John, and contained the appearances of Jesus to Mary and Peter as related by John.

Matthew's gospel—whether the author be Matthew the apostle or not—is as plainly written for Jewish Christians as that of Luke is addressed to Gentiles. The author's dependence on Mark for the actual events of the gospel narrative is manifest. For the rest he draws upon Q for the teaching, in addition to a smaller Palestinian source of his own.

The problem of the authorship and contents of the fourth gospel is too complicated to be adequately discussed in these pages. The reader is referred to the bibliography for information about it. All that need be stated here is that in the opinion of most front rank authorities on the subject to-day, this gospel is not only much later than the others—though not so late as was formerly supposed—but is more of a spiritual treatise than a biography. The writer shows himself well acquainted with Mark and Luke, though it is doubtful if he knew Matthew. But his own importance as an original source for our knowledge of Jesus as an historical figure must not be underrated. In some particulars, for instance, as in regard to the date of the execution of Jesus, he corrects the other evangelists, and it is to him more than to them that we owe the description of what took place in the upper room on the night of the master's betrayal and

arrest; the report suggests that it was the work of an eye-witness with a vivid memory of poignant detail.

If we had no more than the three earlier gospels to go upon we should be left with the puzzling indication that the public ministry of Jesus began and ended in the course of a single year, and that he only visited the capital on the occasion when he met with his death. It seems much more likely that the fourth gospel is right in telling us that he was present at three Passovers—strictly speaking, only on the eve of the third—and, therefore, that he must have been a public figure for at least two, and perhaps nearer three years. Expert students of Christian origins, Jewish as well as Christian, are of opinion, too, that the controversial discourses recorded in this gospel, though so markedly different from Jesus' style of teaching as preserved in the other three, are only what might be expected in the different environment of Jerusalem and the conditions that would certainly attend any attempt at criticising the ideas and practices of the religious leaders there. In fact, taken as a whole, there is good reason for the hypothesis that this gospel was written by a man who knew Jerusalem well, whether the apostle John or not. It is not a far-fetched theory that John the son of Zebedee, one of the earliest followers of Jesus and of the inner circle of his friends, may be behind this gospel just as Peter is behind Mark. Its important historical contents are quite possibly derived from his reminiscences. There is indeed an early tradition which supports this view.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY LIFE OF JESUS

THE earliest and the latest of the gospels, those of Mark and John, begin their narrative with the emergence of Jesus as the initiator of a new religious movement following upon that inspired by the remarkable man known as John the Baptist. From the account given in St. John's gospel we learn that the two ministries ran concurrently for a short time. The Baptist was shortly afterwards imprisoned and later beheaded by Herod Antipas, and then public interest centred on Jesus as a new and greater prophet of the same order as his intrepid predecessor.

But the first and third gospels take us further back by prefixing to their respective versions of the public life and work of Jesus some very beautiful stories of the circumstances attending his birth and childhood. Both of these evangelists state quite definitely that Jesus was born of a virgin, and this has become the generally accepted view of the manner in which the greatest figure on the field of human history came into the world. Perhaps it would be more correct to say it is the view which has been traditionally held throughout the Christian centuries, and the one regarded as authoritative by the Church at large, but it is felt to be a difficulty by many minds at the present day. Few would go so far as to deny the possibility of a virgin birth, but there are many who would require overwhelmingly convincing evidence before believing that such a stupendous event had actually taken place. And it has to be admitted that, charming as the Nativity stories are, they are not free from obscurities and apparent discrepancies. For instance, both evangelists give a genealogy of Jesus, but in each case it is not

that of Mary the mother of the wonder-child, but of her husband Joseph—who at the same time is said not to have been the father. The genealogies do not accord with each other either, though this is a perplexity which may be removed by regarding one or both of them as more or less symbolical rather than literal; in the case of Matthew's, this would almost certainly seem to be so. And, of course, descent would be reckoned officially through the putative father and not through the mother.

There is more than plausibility in the suggestion that Mary and Joseph were nearly related, that both belonged to the house of Judah, that both were descended from the family of David, and that both had interests and kindred in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, though their actual home was in the north. There was a widespread belief at the time that the Messianic king of popular expectation would be born in Bethlehem, and the gospels say that Jesus was born there, though he had no further connection with the place so far as we know. Is it possible that the whole story of this miraculous birth was meant to be understood figuratively? It could be interpreted in this sense without doing the least violence to its spiritual beauty and truth. A hint of the kind is given at the beginning of the fourth gospel (chapter i., verses 12, 13), wherein it is stated that there is a spiritual birth, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is no reference to the virgin birth of Jesus in the epistles of St. Paul, nor in those which bear the names of Peter and John and that of James, "the Lord's brother." And even in the gospels of Matthew and Luke it is stated at a subsequent stage that Jesus was spoken of among his neighbours at Nazareth as Joseph's son and as having brothers and sisters. The reasonable view to take of this mysterious subject is to admit that Christ might have been born without a

human father, but that his uniqueness in the experience of mankind does not in the least depend upon a miraculous generation.

More touching and significant is the explicit statement in our records that the birth took place in the poorest and lowliest surroundings. Joseph and Mary had come up to Bethlehem for registration purposes in connection with a census which had been ordered by the autocratic master of the Roman Empire, Augustus Cæsar. They could not obtain accommodation in the ordinary hostelry, owing, probably, to the special influx of travellers drawn to the town on the same errand as themselves. They were not important or wealthy enough to command exceptional treatment, so they had to find shelter in a stable, most likely the stable belonging to the overcrowded inn where they had at first sought to stay. Tradition has it that the stable was a cave, and in this tradition appears to be right. Visitors to Bethlehem and district will notice even to-day the existence of natural grottos which have been used as dwellings or outhouses. In a rude refuge of this kind Mary's son was born. Christian art has familiarised us with imaginary pictures of the scene wherein the humble abode is shared with cattle, angels, and worshipping shepherds. The cattle may have been there, but the gospel narrative does not say so. That heavenly watchers were there too, whether visible or not, may be taken for granted if we believe in the divine mission of him who thus assumed the nature of our common humanity and shared the conditions of our human lot. One would like to believe, also—and there is no sufficient reason for rejecting the story—that a corner of the veil that hangs between earth and heaven was raised when on the first Christmas night devout shepherds heard the glad tidings of great joy that a saviour had been born in the city of David.

Though poor, Joseph and his wife were not desti-

tute. The husband is described as a carpenter, and, according to tradition, he was much older than Mary, which again seems probable enough from the fact that by the time Jesus began his public work Joseph is no longer mentioned by name with the rest of the family. Mary and the children are severally referred to, but not Joseph, so we can only conclude that he was dead. The part he is represented as playing during the infancy of Jesus—that of guardian and cherisher of the young mother and her babe—is a very fine one. Had he other resources at Bethlehem than are disclosed in the evangelic narrative? Reading between the lines, we may infer as much, for Luke speaks of the presentation of the child in the Temple at Jerusalem some weeks later than the birth at Bethlehem. Matthew tells of a visit paid by wise men who came from the East to pay their homage to the new-born child, whom they found, not apparently in the stable-cave, but in a house. Whose house? That we do not know, but the presumption is that it was one with whose inmates Joseph or Mary or both must have had associations of kindred or friendship. Clearly they were not indigent, though they had to earn their bread, these two pilgrims from Nazareth who will be reverenced for all time as having the care and training of Jesus during his formative years.

It is from Matthew, too, that we learn of a hurried escape into Egypt consequent upon the visit of the wise men. The story goes that these travellers from afar had been making public inquiry in Jerusalem and neighbourhood for the whereabouts of a child who, they had come to believe, was a child of destiny, nothing less than a future king of the Jews. They said they had seen his star in the East and were come to worship him. From this statement the greater number of students of the sources have inferred that the wise men were astrologers and had set out on their journey for no other reason than that they had somehow

become convinced through their pseudo-scientific scrutiny of the heavens that the advent of a mighty prince might shortly be expected in Palestine. There is no real warrant for this conclusion in the narrative itself. It is true that belief in astrology was widespread at the time, as it has been in many centuries since, and is not extinct even to-day; but there is no proof that these men were astrologers or knew anything about the very questionable astrological method of predicting future events. What is much more likely is that, in common with large numbers of people in the ancient world, they believed that the birth of every mighty leader of men was heralded or accompanied by the appearance of a new star in the sky. They thought they themselves had seen such a star, and it has been seriously suggested in modern times that they were not mistaken, that there actually was some more than usually brilliant constellation in the firmament at the time. This may be no more than conjecture, but we are on firmer ground in relation to the rumour that the appearance of the star pointed to the birth of a great prince of Jewish race. We know for certain that in the Roman Empire of the period a prophecy was in circulation that a world ruler would arise out of Judæa. How this expectation entered the minds of people who were not Jews, and had no particular sympathy with Jews, we can only surmise. The most reasonable explanation is that some vaguely understood idea of the Jewish Messianic hope had gained currency and a measure of credence beyond the borders of Israel. This is easy enough to comprehend in view of the fact that there were Jewish communities in almost every great centre of population in the empire then, just as there are in every civilised country to-day.

Whatever the reason for the coming of the wise men they made no secret of their object, and it was the very publicity of their inquiries which exposed the

child Jesus to his first peril. The crafty and superstitious Herod, who reigned in Jerusalem under the overlordship of Rome, heard of their quest and the meaning of it, and, fearing for his own sovereignty, determined to make sure that the prophecy should be nullified. He himself was a foreigner who had never succeeded in gaining the loyalty of the Jewish nation, notwithstanding the fact that he had rebuilt Solomon's Temple with great splendour. He was a cruel and vicious tyrant, of whom his subjects and his own family lived in dread. He now called the chief priests and learned custodians of the national law and tradition together, and demanded to be told the name of the birthplace of the expected Messianic king. The answer was that Bethlehem was the place as foretold by the prophet Micah. Herod then cunningly suggested to the wise men that they should search through Bethlehem till they had found the child, and then return to him with the information, in order that he also might tender his homage to one with so important a part to play in the world in time to come.

It hardly needed the dream which we are told warned the wise men later not to comply with this sinister proposal. On their way to Bethlehem they saw the star again, which they had lost sight of for a time in the course of their previous pilgrimage. A well is pointed out at the side of the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the present day, in which, so a pretty legend has it, the travellers, pausing to drink, saw reflected from the heaven above one solitary beautiful star, and that it was because of this assurance that they were on the right track that " they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," as Matthew says they did. They found the child, worshipped him, presented him with valuable gifts, and then made the return journey to their own country by another route in order to avoid Herod.

We may reasonably assume that before leaving they

told Joseph and Mary of Herod's request and their misgivings concerning its motive, or, what is even more likely, they themselves would be promptly enlightened by Joseph and his friends as to Herod's true character and sinister intentions. The narrative states that both they and Joseph were warned by dreams not to give Herod any opportunity of laying hands either on themselves or the child. It is not wonderful that they should have had such disturbing dreams in the circumstances; the same would be true of persons in imminent peril in any age or country. Joseph's uneasiness for his charges culminated in flight. He took the road to Egypt, which, as the map shows, was then the easiest and most frequented route for travellers in Southern Judæa to take in leaving the country, and it had the additional advantage of enabling them to avoid going by Jerusalem. Herod's record being what it was, we cannot be surprised at the further statement in Matthew's record of events that the tyrant ordered all the male children of Bethlehem under two years of age to be slaughtered, in the hope that he might thus prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy which had brought the wise men on their long journey to Jerusalem. The cruel and wicked measure was only in keeping with many other actions of this ruthless and unscrupulous prince. The man who could put his own wife and son to death would not hesitate about murdering the children of other people if he thought it to his advantage to do so.

How long the humble fugitives remained in Egypt we have no means of ascertaining positively. As Herod died soon after the most probable date of the birth of Jesus, we might infer that they returned almost immediately, especially as Matthew virtually says as much. But it does not follow that this was so. Herod's son Archelaus succeeded him, and reigned until Jesus was about ten years old, so there may be ground for the legendary view, occasionally advanced

even now, that the sojourn in the land of the Pharaohs lasted for some years. On the whole, however, this is unlikely, though there is nothing to hinder the possibility that Jesus in youth or early manhood visited Egypt again, as a vague tradition affirms.

On the other hand, we have Luke's definite statement that Jesus as a boy resided with Joseph and Mary in "their own city, Nazareth." This evangelist does not mention a sudden flight into Egypt, but by implication puts forward the view that the child was taken to Nazareth, whence Joseph and Mary had originally come on their special journey to Bethlehem, soon after the presentation in the Temple—that is, when Jesus was still an infant in arms.

We should greatly like to know more of the childhood of Jesus in this little hill town in Galilee, but here the curtain falls. The third evangelist says that he was a docile and winsome child, for that is the sense of such brief, illuminating comments as that he "was subject unto" his parents, and that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." In view of the unpleasant experience which he underwent in this same scene of his early associations, when he was driven out of Nazareth by his former neighbours some time after the commencement of his public ministry, it is interesting to note that according to Luke he was popular there in childhood and youth. During his formative years, his period of growth in body and mind, says the evangelist, the boy "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

We do not really know more than this for certain about these hidden years. Legend has tried to supply a number of fanciful details about the daily life of Jesus in Nazareth between infancy and the period of adolescence, but these are too full of the merely marvellous to be credible, and some of them are not at all

in keeping with the New Testament portraiture of the character of Jesus. They add nothing to our knowledge of the actual conditions in which his days were passed before he became known to the world outside. Only on one occasion do we get a glimpse on reliable testimony as to the kind of boy he really was and the strange and unusual bent of his nature. His parents, as Luke expressly calls them, were accustomed, like all good practising Jews, to go up to the capital every year at the Feast of the Passover. Whether they took him with them on most of these journeys is not stated. Luke's manner of telling the story implies that they did, for he speaks as though the child were there as a matter of course. But the specific occasion when this was so, as recorded in the narrative, was when Jesus was twelve years old. Authorities on the history of Judaism tell us that a boy verging on puberty would be taken to the Temple for religious reasons, which is precisely what Luke leads us to infer. Jesus, probably in company with other children of his age, underwent some amount of examination and instruction at the hands of the doctors of the law, within the Temple precincts. They found him an apt and well-trained pupil, a fact which throws some light on the home life at Nazareth and the influences brought to bear upon him therein. Making all due allowance for the purity of soul, originality of mind, and spiritual genius of the boy himself, it must yet be admitted that the atmosphere of the home of Joseph and Mary had much to do with the development that showed itself thus early. The epistle of James, commonly called the Lord's brother, and the first head of the Church in Jerusalem in after years, provides corroborative illustration. There is no originality in James, but it is evident that the air he breathes is that of a lofty though conventional type of Jewish piety. The character of James stands high in primitive Christian opinion, as his surname, " the Just," sufficiently testi-

fies. Professor Burkitt, in his book *Christian Beginnings,* gives reason for believing that the epistle of James was originally written in the Aramaic dialect spoken by the people of Nazareth—that is, the dialect in daily use in the family circle to which Jesus belonged. The whole tone of the epistle illustrates better than any other source we possess what the moral and religious atmosphere of the home in which Jesus grew to manhood must have been.

What the actual relationship was between Jesus and the other younger members of this household has been much discussed. It is not certain that James was the brother of Jesus in the strict sense of the term. It is sufficient to note that the evidence of the New Testament writing attributed to James gives us, as clearly as anything can, a true insight into the conditions prevailing in the humble family of which Jesus was a member, and in which the growing boy imbibed his first ideas about God and man. This is true even if James were, as some authorities maintain, only a cousin, or, as others would say, merely a foster-brother. The ideals cherished and inculcated in that home were thoroughly good. The greatest spiritual teacher of all time could hardly have had a better foundation on which to build, as simple as it was wholesome, as lowly as it was pure.

This witness is fully borne out by what Luke relates of the sequel of the visit of the boy Jesus to the Temple, as above noted. When the caravan of pilgrims from Nazareth began the return journey, Joseph and Mary took for granted that the boy was somewhere in the company, and it was only after having formed camp on the completion of the first day's journey that they discovered their mistake; he was not there, and they sought him in vain among their kindred and acquaintances. At once they hastened back to Jerusalem, and it was not until three days later that they came upon him where they

had left him, still discussing in the midst of the doctors in the Temple the great themes of the religion of which they were the recognised exponents. The narrative is careful not to say that he was arguing or presuming to teach. He was listening with deep interest to them and asking intelligent and searching questions. That they were both surprised and pleased at the unusual knowledge he displayed and his understanding of the faith of Israel is also stated. Mary gently expostulated with him for the anxiety he had unwittingly caused: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." How tenderly put! Here is another little sidelight on the relations subsisting in that lowly Galilean home. Sorrowing! They loved him then, and he and they were plainly on terms of mutual confidence and absence of constraint. "How is it that ye sought me?" he asks in wonderment. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

The evangelist says that they did not understand the meaning of this question. It was one of his youthful sayings which the mother kept and pondered in her heart, so the exquisite comment is added. All this part of Luke's gospel is given from Mary's point of view, and it would seem that Mary is herself the direct source of the information it contains. This is the unescapable conclusion in the present instance; none but Mary could have supplied the touching detail. And who but Mary trained the boy to refer to God as Father in a manner so spontaneous yet withal so reverent? Looking more closely at the text, one discerns that it was not Mary who failed to understand. When the others wondered at the expression, she kept her own counsel, holding the secret in her heart.

The visitor to Galilee to-day cannot fail to be struck by the situation of Nazareth. It lies in a hollow of the bold range of hills to the north of the fertile plain of Esdraelon, which has been the scene of some

of the most famous battles of history, not the least important being that whereby Lord Allenby wrested Palestine from the dominion of the Turk. Many people speak of the Great War as Armageddon, a conflict of the nations foretold in the Scriptural use of that name, but how many realise that Armageddon lies in this very plain, and that it was one of the many spots upon which Jesus was able to look down from the hills surrounding his childhood's home? Nazareth has charm and attractiveness even to-day; one feels that it was not an unsuitable setting for the earlier years of Jesus. At the time when the present writer visited it, the slopes of the hills were covered with verdure and lavishly spangled with the many-hued anemones referred to the discourses of Jesus as the lilies of the field. When Jesus wandered over these hills as a youth he noticed everything, as his public utterances prove—not only the flowers whose colouring surpassed Solomon in all his glory, but the birds of the air and the sheep on the hillsides. There they are still, unchanged, just as he knew them. The town abuts on the ancient caravan route from the territories of the north to Egypt on the south; it was no isolated community that dwelt there.

Noisy, chattering boys will compete with each other to-day for the privilege of showing you the house wherein he used to work. These youngsters will salute you with scraps of broken English and French. Did the youngsters of Nazareth in Jesus' day pick up in a similar manner the language of the Roman invader and the Greek merchant? It is all but certain that at any rate they were familiar with the latter, for Greek was the lingua franca of the time throughout all the eastern portion of the vast Roman Empire. Galilee was extensively permeated by Greek influences, as we see from the very name of the region on the eastern side of the lake of Galilee called Decapolis; and the excavations which are now pro-

ceeding under British Government supervision tend to show that these influences had penetrated more deeply into the common life of the people than we have hitherto known. Dr. Macalister, in his *Century of Excavation in Palestine,* says that Jesus himself must have been able to speak Greek, the colloquial Greek in which the New Testament is written, otherwise there would have been no point in drawing attention, as the gospels occasionally do, to some of the very ordinary Aramaic expressions to which he gave utterance on specific occasions. Other authorities are of opinion that some of the most important portions of his public teaching were delivered in Greek.

In the synagogue school at Nazareth he would be familiarised with the Old Testament Scriptures, and his recorded teaching shows that these had sunk deeply into his mind and heart. But there is reason to believe that his reading did not stop at these. The contemporary literature now termed Apocalyptic, to which reference has already been made, must have influenced him to some extent, as it certainly did the minds of many who listened to him. We cannot understand the New Testament without taking this literature into account. Some portions of it have survived to the present day and are available in translations. Dr. Charles's *Between the Old and New Testaments,* and Dr. Thomas Walker's *What Jesus Read,* make the connection plain between the ruling ideas of the New Testament and those of such writings as the composite Book of Enoch and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, though the superiority of the former is manifest. That Jesus was acquainted with Apocalyptic is almost beyond question. It supplied him with much that he was able to take for granted in the audiences he addressed, though a careful comparison will show that he was not in the least limited by its somewhat fantastic notions and elaborate symbolism. The Old Testament has one example of

Apocalyptic in the Book of Daniel, and the New Testament in the Book of Revelation.

Thus Jesus grew to manhood in this upland Galilean town. He had to work for his living, following the trade of Joseph, and perhaps becoming later the bread-winner of the household, as some authorities suggest, though if this be so it seems strange that he was able to give it up without detriment to his dependents when he felt himself called to become a public teacher. He worked at the carpenter's bench, but as his own master, not in the employ of anyone else. It would be a mistake to think of him, as so many now do, as belonging to the ranks of the proletariat. Our industrial distinctions nowadays did not obtain in the society to which Jesus belonged. His status among his fellows would not be that of a man of wealth, but it would be one of fair comfort and good repute. The sympathy he showed later with the outcast and destitute did not spring from the bitter recollection of having been compelled to share their lot.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AS A PUBLIC FIGURE

A TIME at length arrived when this young man, for he was no more, being about thirty years of age, felt impelled to come forth as a preacher to his countrymen. This could have been no sudden decision on his part; he must have been preparing for it, or at least weighing it in his mind as a possibility, for a considerable period beforehand, as his matured utterances

show. If he had not thought out his position carefully in regard to the mighty truths he afterwards taught, he would not have been able to attract the attention he instantly did, and having so thought and steeped his soul in spiritual things he could hardly have kept silent. Sooner or later he was bound to speak.

The occasion, however, developed very naturally from the widespread interest aroused by the preaching of John the Baptist. John had come forward with the announcement of the imminence of that drastic divine intervention in human affairs for which, as we have seen, many pious people had long been hoping, and he earnestly exhorted all who would listen to prepare themselves for it by repentance and zealous amendment of life. As an outward sign of this determination to have done with an old life and begin a new one in accordance with the revealed will of God, John's converts accepted baptism at his hands. The simple ceremony was no more than a solemn way of signifying that those undergoing it had complied with his appeal for purer conduct. John was not a teacher; his own view of his mission was that he was but a herald, the forerunner of a greater personality to come. The gospel account has it that he recognised in Jesus the divinely endowed being for whom he himself had been inspired to prepare the way. We learn, too, that at a later date, when the Baptist lay a prisoner in the fortress of Herod Antipas, he sent messages to Jesus with the inquiry: "Art thou he that should come or look we for another?" In other words, he wished to know if Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah of current expectation.

As yet an unknown pilgrim from Galilee, Jesus had come south, like many of his neighbours, to listen to John's preaching and, as though he were one of the Baptist's many converts, to be baptised in the River Jordan. Why he did this is a question that has been much discussed. The most reasonable answer to it is

that he felt himself to be on the threshold of new beginnings and wished to put the past behind him. He was conscious of having no guilt to confess, but rather of having a new consecration of himself to make. Here was his definite call; his work lay before him; he would return to the carpenter's bench no more.

In common with most of the great masters of men who have set their mark deep on history, Jesus withdrew into solitude for a short time before beginning to preach. This preliminary period of retirement and introspection is described as the temptation in the wilderness. Nothing could have been known about it by the outside world unless Jesus himself at some subsequent point in his career had given a description of it to his friends, and a candid analysis of the details of this confession shows it to have been in the main symbolical rather than literal. Psychologically it rings true to experience. Jesus had to settle with himself what he was going to do and how he was going to do it. There is no sound critical reason for denying, as some matter-of-fact investigators of Christian origins are inclined to do, that even at this early stage in his consciousness of a special vocation Jesus may have thought of himself as the Messiah. The question has been asked why he should have troubled to do so, seeing that the Messiah was not a real being but only a vaguely held and not very self-consistent idea, which would prove hampering rather than helpful to the deliverance of a spiritual message. The only explanation is that to Jesus, as to his contemporaries of Jewish race, the name stood for God's instrument and representative among men. He knew himself to be that, and, therefore, could see no other choice than to accept this self-designation, notwithstanding the risks and drawbacks attaching thereto.

This has been called his secret, for it was a conviction which he kept to himself until near the end of his public activities. He did so because he saw plainly

that if he were to proclaim himself as the Messiah he would mislead people as to his real intentions, and this was precisely the chief point that he had to clear up in his own consciousness before taking the momentous step of appearing before his fellow men as a messenger of heaven. This was the real meaning of the temptation. He felt himself to be the possessor of great powers of leadership. On the plane of secular dominion he might expect to do at least as well as David of old or the great Judas Maccabæus of a few generations earlier than his own, or as Mahomet did a few centuries later. What kind of Messiah was he going to be? That was the question to be determined before any further venture could be made. Was he to seek the advantage that wealth could bring, or the adventitious influence of popular favour, or the still more perilous heights of political rule? All these were within his reach. The times were ripe for such an achievement; there would be ready response; he need but accommodate himself a little to the passions and prejudices of the hour. "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

He would have none of it. His decision was taken once for all. He was indeed God's Messiah, but the kingdom he would inaugurate would not be a kingdom of this world. He would work by spiritual means for the attainment of spiritual ends, and nothing should seduce him into following an easier or meaner path. Yet who knows what might have happened had Jesus chosen to go to work in another way? This is a point not often thought of, but it is worth dwelling upon. Time has proved him to be the greatest of the sons of men. No Cæsar or Napoleon could have done more had he been swayed by ambition or by what men of violence call patriotism. Had he employed force and craft to secure his ends in the name of righteousness he would have had plenty of support. It is one of the grim ironies of history that he was crucified on the

charge of having done this very thing and as aiming at a temporal crown. On the other hand, he has forever purged the name Messiah or Christ from any other associations than the purely spiritual. He has made it impossible for anyone else ever to bear that title, though there were others for whom the claim had previously been made.

The gospels do not give us a connected account of the movements of Jesus from the time he began his public work until it closed in death, nor can we trace the chronological sequence of events from the evidence at our command. We do not know for certain how long the period of his full activity lasted. At the longest it must have been amazingly short when measured against the effect it has produced upon the history of the world. None could have suspected at the time that they were in presence of the most important and fructifying process that had ever taken place in human affairs since time began. Did Jesus himself know it? There are some indications that he did, for he is reported to have said that his own generation would be condemned in comparison with its predecessors because it had failed to perceive the greatness of the revelation that had come to it. He had clear vision from the first of what he intended to do and how he would do it. Some critics have claimed to discover signs of vacillation and change of purpose in what is recorded of his methods and utterances, but there is no justification for such assertions. From first to last Jesus went about the business he had in hand with the calm self-poise of one who knew quite well what he meant to accomplish and had but a short time wherein to do it.

The object he had in view may be succinctly stated as that of unveiling to men the true nature of the supreme good and enabling them to lay hold of it. That supreme good his followers came in time to identify with what they perceived him to be in him-

self. To employ a modern phrase, he was the expression of eternal reality in terms of a single human life. He showed both what God was and what man ought to be. Those who stood nearest to him and understood him best were so convinced of this, that their faith in him became merged with their faith in God, and this long before they attempted to articulate that faith in the form of a creed.

Where and how the work began cannot be positively ascertained. The suggestion in the fourth gospel is that when his lonely vigil in the Judæan wilderness was over, Jesus came back to the banks of the Jordan where John was baptising and began to make disciples in a similar manner. This view is consistent with the statement in the earlier gospels that when John was cast into prison the new teacher returned to his native Galilee preaching from place to place in the synagogues and the open air. It would mean that at first he spoke more frequently to audiences gathered together at the ordinary times of worship in the synagogues than at other times and places. There was nothing strange in this procedure. Considerable freedom was allowed in these assemblages, and anyone with anything to say was permitted to say it. The same practice prevailed when later on the Christian missionaries began their propaganda. The apostle Paul always made first for the Jewish synagogue in any city he visited, and it was from the synagogues that the new Christian communities were largely formed.

But Jesus did not confine himself to the synagogues, and after a time he was no longer welcome therein. He addressed people anywhere that opportunity afforded, sometimes in an open space on the side of a hill, at others on the lake shore with a boat for a pulpit.

How he lived we are not told. He had left Nazareth, as we have seen, but whether before or after the commencement of his work in the south

there is nothing to show. What became of the home there or what arrangements had to be made for its inmates is not stated either, but we are led to infer that Mary and the other members of the family continued as before. This is the obvious implication of the question of the people of Nazareth when he had become well known: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" The slight discrimination between the brothers and the sisters in this recital would indicate that the brothers had homes of their own, perhaps elsewhere than in Nazareth, but that the sisters still dwelt under the same roof with their mother or near thereto. How the old home was supported it may be profitless to inquire. The family may have been possessed of sufficient substance to render anxiety on this score unnecessary, and it is unimaginable that Jesus would have exposed his mother to want. He himself had now fixed his abode in Capernaum, a convenient centre whence he might go to and fro on his evangelistic tours throughout the province. If the house were his own, one would like to know how it was looked after and by what means it was maintained. If it were the house of Simon the fisherman, a poor man, and one who before long was called to share in his master's itineraries, the problem is no less easy to solve. Mention is made of a common purse whence the wants of Jesus and his associates at a later date were, it may be presumed, supplied, though even as regards this source of income there are questions to be answered. There is a hint that alms were given out of it to the poor and needy, but did Jesus and his immediate fellow-workers depend for their subsistence upon voluntary offerings? One very suggestive and interesting item of information is given to us by St. Luke, namely, that as Jesus went from village to village he was accompanied not only by an inner circle

of male disciples but by certain women, some of them of high station, including the wife of the steward of King Herod's household, and that these women "ministered to them of their substance."

We learn, then, on good authority, that Jesus speedily attracted a great following, both in Galilee and Judæa, and that this following consisted not only of the poor and undistinguished but also of some persons of rank and repute. There would not be many of the latter, but an illuminating remark like the one just quoted shows that there were at least a few. Nor does it stand alone. There are other passages scattered here and there in the narratives of the four evangelists, which lead us to infer that Jesus had friends and adherents, some of them unnamed, belonging to the more influential classes. Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha were of this order. Their home at Bethany was always open to him, and they were on terms of affectionate intimacy with him, though they took no active share in his work in the open. Joseph of Arimathæa, as we have already seen, was another, and he is definitely stated to have been a rich man. And who the person was who lent the upper room at Jerusalem for Jesus' last earthly meal with his disciples, and who presumably furnished the meal as well, we do not know, but the whole tenour of the story in which he figures is to the effect that there was a certain understanding between him and the master. The arrangements specified were neither casual nor accidental; they could only have been arrived at by a personal intercourse based on mutual confidence.

An outstanding feature in the ministry of Jesus from the very first was his exercise of miraculous power. That this contributed to the immense vogue he speedily attained there can be no doubt; it would do the same to-day, not only in Palestine but anywhere else, notwithstanding our difference in mental outlook from that of the Galileans of nineteen hundred years

ago. It was felt to be novel; the Baptist had worked no miracles. By some it was hailed as a divine enduement, by others as akin to witchcraft. Jesus himself deprecated the excessive interest it aroused. Mere wonder-working he despised. He repeatedly tried to divert people's minds from concentrating on his healing gifts rather than upon spiritual values. Occasionally he tried to keep a beneficent action of the kind from public notice; more often he failed to do so. He healed the sick by touch and sometimes by the spoken word only. He is said to have freed many who were possessed by demons—a bizarre element in the gospel narrative which seems to the modern educated mind to partake of superstition. But Jesus himself took it seriously, and we have no right to dismiss it as unworthy of acceptance. Workers in some parts of the foreign mission field to-day have found themselves in contact with phenomena of which they could give no other explanation than the one so simply taken for granted in the New Testament. This was the conclusion, for instance, forced upon so acute a mind as that of the late Bishop of Zanzibar, Dr. Weston.

It is more difficult to account for the Nature miracles of Jesus—the stilling of the tempest, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the turning of water into wine. In part these may be figurative, though it is hard to see how they could be wholly so. In the fourth gospel we find a strong sanction for this view, for there are no parables recorded therein, all the miracles related being used as parables to illustrate some spiritual truth. Thus "I am the bread of life" is the comment on the feeding of the five thousand. "I am the resurrection" are the words that precede the raising of Lazarus.

Some present-day students of the Christian sources, such as Dean Inge, deny that Jesus ever thought of founding a church, or attributed any importance to institutions and organisations for the continuance of his work. His action in selecting twelve men from the

mass of his followers and associating them with himself in a closer intimacy than the rest enjoyed is inexplicable on this theory. They did little, if anything, during the period of his greatest activity, which could not have been done equally well without them, and if we are to judge from their behaviour in the days that followed the final removal of his visible presence from the world, they thought of themselves as the appointed leaders and guides of a new society. Their election of Matthias to fill the place of the traitor Judas is proof of this. We may readily agree that Jesus laid down no rules for the governance of the society known to history as his Church, but that he did intend to create it is surely demonstrated by the sequence of events. It was to be the new Israel, the chosen of God, to supersede the old in mediating a divine revelation to mankind. So close was to be the connection of this society with himself that from the first Christian Pentecost onward its members thought of him as ensouling it, as it were, as being still present in and influencing the world by its means.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

The typical man or woman in western civilisation today exhibits more interest in what Jesus taught than in his other reported activities. It is as a teacher and an example of right living that he appeals most strongly to our practical age. Animated discussion is going on everywhere, especially since the Great War, as to the true bearing of the ethical principles of Jesus upon

modern problems, and one of the commonest assumptions made in relation thereto is that if these principles were accepted and put into general operation all would be well with the world.

But there are difficulties in the way of reducing this theory to practice. Some well-equipped critics of the gospel sources aver that there are contradictions in the counsels attributed to the master; and all are agreed that there are wide tracts in the sphere of our industrial and commercial relations which the precepts of Jesus do not cover, nor does he appear to have contemplated the existence of such problems as those which confront the League of Nations in our time. Jesus did not address himself to the perplexities of our complicated economic rivalries, our social tensions, or our exaggerated nationalistic prejudices and antipathies. It has been complained that his teaching is at once too vague to be of practical use when put to the test, and too idealistic for literal acceptance. We are told that no man would dare to live by the exhortations of the Sermon on the Mount—to turn his cheek to the smiter, to lend, hoping for nothing in return, and so on. No one ever has done so.

There are those who hold, with Dr. Schweitzer, that the teaching of Jesus was never intended to apply to such a world as ours, for the very good reason that he did not believe such a world would ever exist. He was looking for the end of a troubled age, say the adherents of this view, and the inauguration of something vastly better wherein suffering and injustice would be unknown. Hence he preached only an "interim ethic," a series of counsels which anyone could obey who was convinced that the end of the existing order of things was near at hand. If we sincerely believed that there would be no England and no Europe by the day after to-morrow or in a few months at the farthest, we should feel quite justified in making no provision for the future, in refusing to

protect ourselves against enemies, and in going two miles out of our way in company with the marauder who had forced us to carry his load for one. We might behave in this manner either if we were persuaded that absolute ruin and destruction would soon overwhelm all human affairs or if, on the contrary, we were equally sure that a new and more glorious day were imminent.

But these various objections and interpretations all fall to the ground the moment we perceive and admit one simple criterion of the purpose of Jesus in teaching as he did. *It was to lift men's thoughts to an immutable and eternal good.* The assumption is a mistaken one that his primary desire was that of leading men to establish right relations with one another; his primary desire was that they should enter into right relations with God. If readers of his words could but see that his governing intention was not ethical at all, but something far deeper, they would be in possession of the key, not only to all that he said, but to all that he did. This is the thing that the characteristically modern mind finds most difficulty in grasping. But it is essential to a true understanding of the gospel message. Not what I am to my neighbour but what I am to God is the really important thing for me; what I ought to be to my neighbour will take care of itself if I can get the other matter right. Once clear vision of eternal good becomes mine, once I become conformed to the nature of that changeless reality which is above all time and sense, I shall no longer be troubling about secular success or security or ease or any of the ordinary values that the ordinary man strives after. I shall be a changed being with a higher outlook.

This explains the method of Jesus. It was not ethics that occupied his thoughts—not what one man ought to do or leave undone in relation to another, not what would make the world better, not social justice or

injustice, not equity nor integrity nor any commercial value whatsoever. These values have their place, but they should not be given the first place in any heart that is in quest of the spiritual ideal. If religion had never been heard of, if there were no life but life in the flesh, we should still have to invent some ethical code in order to live together in any degree of comfort and safety; we should have to develop a system of rights and duties and obligations and insist upon conduct in accordance therewith. But Jesus looked far beyond this. Taking each man just as he was, and regarding him as an immortal being and an end in himself, he said in effect: "Seek to be and to do in this world only what is consistent with the life that you will be living in the world to come when your nature is at one with the nature of God." He did not tell his hearers to hand over the cloak when the coat was stolen because he thought it would be good for the thief, but because it was in keeping with the detachment from earthly things which is an essential quality of the spiritual mind. Incidentally the action might be good for the thief also, but that did not necessarily follow from the principle, and in this very unideal world would very likely not follow. Nor did Jesus command his hearers to love their enemies because he thought that in this way the world would gradually become purged of all violence and hate. He knew men better than that. When he laid this requirement upon his disciples, it was that they themselves might be freed from all earthly hindrances to the attainment of that perfect love which is at once the highest goal of man's attainment and the means thereto. It is the one grand reality beyond all seeming, the reality whose possession is in itself perfect and everlasting bliss.

This view of the object of the teaching of Jesus receives abundant confirmation from what is told of his mode of imparting it. Very little is available of

what he said in the synagogues, but out of doors he was accustomed to a large extent to draw upon his observation of daily life for stories which illustrated his meaning. These parables of his are rightly felt to be one of the most precious parts of his immortal utterances. Their subject matter enables us to reconstruct in imagination the features of the social life of the time and people among whom Jesus did his work. Some of the types alluded to therein are as familiar in Galilee at the present time as they were then; others have passed away. The shepherd with his flock and the fisherman with his nets still abound; the venal magistrate open to bribes has been replaced of late by the representatives of a less arbitrary mode of government. But while human society endures the stories of the prodigal son, of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver, of the sower who went forth to sow, and the allusions to the wheat and the tares, to the pearl of great price, to the sparrow that falls to the ground, to the flowers of the field, to the toilers in the vineyard, and most of all to the little child who was his illustration of the spirit in which alone men can find access to God, all these will be treasured by young and old of every race and clime.

It is in the substance of the teaching of Jesus rather than in the form that we must look for originality. It was his habit to take hold of the terms he found in common use and pour a richer content into them. Thus he called God Father, and many people take for granted that this was an innovation and the starting point of a new conception of the nature of God and his attitude to mankind. It was not so. Jesus was not the first to call God Father; that had often been done before, and not only by people of his own race; pagans had done the same. Olympian Zeus was often referred to as the father of gods and men—that is, he was father in the sense of creator. It is noteworthy that Jesus applied this name to God when he himself was

still but a child, as we have seen from his recorded reply to his mother when he was found among the doctors in the Temple. There is reason to believe that the term was current in the more earnest religious circles connected with the Judaism of the period to denote not only the conception of God as Creator but as in nature akin to man, the Father of our spirits. In the mouth of Jesus it acquired an intensity not shown elsewhere, a suggestion of loving communion, of mutual confidence, of benevolent, watchful care on the one side, and filial duty on the other. Jesus does not hesitate to illustrate divine fatherhood from what his hearers already knew of human fatherhood at its best. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

It is when we come to scrutinise the words of Jesus about the kingdom of God and eternal life that we discern his uniqueness most plainly, though here again not a few investigators have been strangely blind to the facts. As Rudolf Otto quite truly says in his great book, *The Idea of the Holy,* research has proved that to Jesus the kingdom of God meant simply the eternally real. Eternal life is only another expression for the same thing. These terms were on everybody's lips when Jesus first began to address public assemblies. He could hardly avoid referring to them even if he had wished to do so. We have already seen something of what the kingdom of God meant in the popular mind. It was a synonym for a good time coming, though no one knew quite what, nor have we sure evidence to show how many of the contemporaries of Jesus definitely believed in it at all. By some it was as materialistically conceived as the Bolshevist State is to-day; by others, though probably these were the minority, it was thought of as involving a radical change of spirit in its members. No one

was very clear as to how it would come about or exactly what its advent would involve. Jesus was quite clear about it. He taught that it was the supreme good, existing already in fulness in the invisible world —the perfect love, and righteousness, and bliss of spiritual beings dwelling in harmonious communion with God. The kingdom had already come in some degree even in this present world wherever and whenever a human heart was humbly and reverently yielded to the operations of the Spirit of God and was firmly set upon eternal rather than temporal values. And it had still to come, in that no man in this state of life was fully able to grasp all that was implied in being conformed to and possessed by the blessedness that knows neither change nor death nor decay, and in which alone can man's true destiny be fulfilled. The human soul can never rest satisfied in anything short of this consummation of its yearnings towards better things.

It can hardly be necessary to point out that by eternal life Jesus did not mean simply endless life in a world to come, nor did those whom he addressed misunderstand the significance of the term. Of course he and they assumed the immortality of the soul, but eternal life was not merely or chiefly a matter of duration. Eternal life is the all-perfect life, life from which no good is missing, life as consciously lived with God. In his valedictory prayer in the upper room, Jesus is represented as saying that life eternal is to know God, and this is about as accurate a definition of it as could be given. If we know God now, albeit only dimly; if by prayer and faith we are succeeding in living humbly, reverently, purely, kindly, and in seeking with undivided mind to act in accordance with the best we are able to conceive, then we are participating in eternal life. Expediency has nothing to do with it: utilitarianism has nothing to do with it. To be faithful to our vision of an ideal or

eternal good might involve, not only the immediate surrender of one's own temporal well-being, but the destruction of the social order to which we belong. The greatest things that have ever been done in this world have been done in obedience to transcendent imperatives and inspired by the conviction that the eternally true and right are realities which must take precedence of everything else in our allegiance. This is what Jesus insisted upon from first to last, as is evident from a careful study of his recorded utterances, and his teaching has been vindicated by the noblest human experience ever since his day.

That there are some puzzling elements in the teaching is not surprising when we remember that he did not give it to the world in book form but orally. Here and there his reporters may have obscured his meaning or even partly misunderstood it. To the end it is apparent that some of his disciples thought he might yet found a temporal kingdom. His crucifixion falsified this hope for a time, but it was renewed after his resurrection; and, as most of the earlier New Testament writings show, the first Christian community was firmly convinced that the risen master would speedily return again in majesty to institute an entirely new order of things with a mighty hand. Did Jesus himself give any colour for this expectation in what he said about the kingdom of God and eternal life? Yes, and no. He did predict a collapse of the then existing world order through his own instrumentality, but in so doing he used the language of metaphor and symbol. There is nothing more impressive in all history than this confidence of his that he would be able to do more in the world after his visible departure from it than before, and it has been completely justified by the facts. Jerusalem was destroyed as he said it would be, and a new dispensation did begin when the witness of the Christian Church continued and fulfilled that of the Israel of old. These

were his advents—in judgment, inspiration, and blessing—nor is there any reason to believe that they are the only special advents of the kind; there have been others in history and there are probably more to come. One of his most suggestive parables, that of the Last Judgment, as it is called, gives warrant for this conclusion. The frame-work of the parable was probably derived from contemporary sources; there were many such in circulation at the time to encourage people to look forward to their emancipation from the rule of Rome. But the distinctive feature of this one is that when the Son of Man shall come in his glory all nations shall be gathered before him to receive sentence according to their deserts. This is precisely what has happened in the past nineteen hundred years and the process is still going on. Nations and civilisations live or die in proportion as they give expression to the divine idea as revealed in the example and teaching of Jesus. How frequently, for example, during and since the Great War has the statement been made by moralists and sociologists, in addition to preachers and politicians, that either society must be reconstituted on a definitely Christian basis or go to pieces by the impact of a worse catastrophe than the last! It does not require any straining of the letter of the teaching of Jesus to see that in this respect his vision of the future has come true.

His favourite self-designation was Son of Man. Much has been said and written about this choice of a title, but it does not seem to have excited any wonderment in his followers, nor is there any obscurity in his use of it. It was an Old Testament phrase used of a prophet as representative of a particular age and people, and as the vehicle of God's message thereto. In the Apocalyptic literature current in Jesus' day, particularly in the Book of Enoch, which almost certainly he must have read, it is used in much the same sense as in the Book of Daniel—that is, as indicating a

being who is both human and more than human, one who has yet to be revealed as the succourer and judge of the human race. It is reasonable to suppose that Jesus might have borrowed the title from this source because so nearly descriptive of what he felt himself to be. But, even if he had not read Enoch, he could have derived the idea from the books of Ezekiel and Daniel with which both he and his hearers were familiar. It stood in his mind for a great conception, that of one whose unique destiny it was to suffer in order to regenerate mankind.

Is this too much to say? Some scholars refuse to accept it on the ground that it modernises and theologises too much the thought of Jesus about himself, but if we are careful not to read more into the conception than is vouched for by what the earliest Christion teachers themselves thought and said about their master, we are on safe ground. And a fact that admits of no dispute is Jesus' identification of himself with another Old Testament ideal—namely, that of the suffering servant of God as portrayed by the second Isaiah, especially in the fifty-third chapter of that great book: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

Beyond any question he thought of himself as having to suffer in order to reign; and in this belief he shows himself unique. None but he had ever thought of combining the function of Messiahship with that of vicarious suffering. It was the most daring affirmation that he had to make and the one that his disciples found hardest to believe. But it has enthroned him in the human heart for all time.

CHAPTER VI

"VIA CRUCIS"

WHAT Jesus required of those who believed in him was strictly consistent with his view of his own mission. Again and again under different figures of speech he stated that a primary condition of membership of the Kingdom of God and the attainment of eternal life, or, as we might put it to-day, the one indispensable means of arriving at ultimate reality—was that of dying to live. Men were to escape from themselves, to renounce self-love and petty self-interest, before they could hope to win through to that larger good for which their souls were hungering then as ours are now. They were to die to live, lose to find, give to gain. The most striking metaphor in which he clothed this exhortation was that of the cross. He is reported as saying on one occasion, perhaps on more than one: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

At first sight it seems strange that he should have employed this mode of speech, seeing that he himself was not yet crucified and that the last thing any of his adherents would allow themselves to expect was that such a fate could ever befall him. Yet it is easy enough to understand now that we are able to look back on the event. Crucifixion was a frequent spectacle under Roman military usages, and Jesus and his friends must often have watched a condemned criminal on the way to the scene of death, the poor victim being compelled to carry the cross on which he was to suffer. It would be while their eyes were still resting compassionately upon the central figure in the dreadful drama, bowed under the load of the rough

wooden gibbet, that the great teacher would utter the saying above quoted. In the circumstances no one who heard it could possibly forget it or misunderstand its spiritual significance. The old Adam of their self-love would have to be crucified, so to speak, if they sincerely desired to be of their master's fellowship in the things of God. It would be no easy process. They would have to suffer, and they would have to die to all that the ordinary man of the world esteems of most value—the desire for ease, reputation, success, material possessions, and the like, to be utterly free from self-seeking, not only in secular things, but in spiritual things also.

That this teaching was remembered and its purport realised is evident from much that is recorded elsewhere in the New Testament as characterising the first Christian communities. St. Paul in particular makes use of language vividly reminiscent of it. "I die daily" is one of his expressions. "I am crucified with Christ" is another. "Our old man is crucified with him" is a third.

There could be no greater mistake than to imagine that Jesus ever meant to make the way of discipleship easy. It is no easier for those who want to obey him now than it was for his original followers; the heart of the problem always remains the same. Self is the enemy, or rather the lower self in each of us; and the testimony of royal souls in relation thereto has ever been the same. We have somehow to subdue this insistent self ere we can hope to enter upon possession of the highest good. The quest has to be a disinterested one too; we must seek the good because it is the good, the highest because it is the highest, and not because of any personal gain we expect to accrue to us therefrom. As old Thomas à Kempis puts it, the true follower of Jesus will strive as hard to escape from being applauded and honoured by men, and from everything that would tend to foster vanity and

pride and self-indulgence, as other men will strive to acquire these gratifications. And the strange thing about the kind of life that Jesus commended and illustrated is that the self-renunciation it demands inevitably leads, not to the destruction, but to the enlargement and enrichment of selfhood. The happiest people in the world are not the selfish but the unselfish, not the ambitious but the lowly in heart, not the grabbers but the givers, not those who own most but those who love most. The ideal of Jesus has been amply vindicated even in its simplest expressions. Few have penetrated to its inmost sanctuary, but all who have done so have borne consistent witness to the truth that in fullest self-abandonment to the will of God is a self-fulfilment beyond words to describe. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as self-sacrifice except on the hither side; on the farther side it becomes self-realisation. Crucifixion is followed by resurrection in the experience of every man, as in the experience of him who first declared the seeming paradox in the terms above cited.

The closing period of the ministry of Jesus as described by the four evangelists presents not a few perplexities to the student of the records. The greatest of these perplexities is the fact that Jesus seems to have gone deliberately to his death. Why he should have done so is not fully explained anywhere. As far as we can judge from the materials at our command, he was under no compulsion to put himself into the hands of his enemies as he ultimately did. A large proportion of the populace of Palestine was thoroughly loyal to him and remained so to the end. A people that held the name of John the Baptist in such high honour would not be likely to be hostile to Jesus, and we are expressly told that so great was the reverence for the memory of John as a prophet that priests and Pharisees dared not disregard it when challenged to do so by Jesus himself at the cleansing of the Temple

immediately before his arrest. That the people did not understand Jesus fully may be taken for granted, but it is said that they heard him gladly, which they would not have done if his words had not appealed to them.

Yet it was when public interest in him was at its height that he began to speak to the inner circle of his disciples about his coming rejection and violent end; and it was at the very moment when his Messiahship was spontaneously acknowledged by the leading member of this inner circle that he explicitly foretold his crucifixion.

They were in the region of Cæsarea Philippi in the northern territory on the occasion specified, when he suddenly began to ask them who or what the public supposed him to be. They replied that most people thought of him as a prophet like the Baptist. "But whom say ye that I am?" was his next question, to which Peter boldly replied: "Thou art the Christ." This pleased him greatly, because it was through their own daily and increasing knowledge of him, and not because of any specific claim that he had made, that they had come to this conclusion—for probably it was not Peter's only, but had been talked over previously and repeatedly by the apostles among themselves. Then, and not till then, and while still asking them to be reticent on the subject, with this explicit confession fresh in their minds, he begins to intimate to them in the plainest terms that he will shortly be exposed to ignominy and maltreatment at the hands of the national authorities and crucified like a common felon. No wonder that the incongruity struck them, and that they failed to realise the necessity for such a tragic close to a work of such power as was then going on. We should have been equally puzzled by the announcement, and indeed still are. We cannot explain the prophecy and his subsequent action except on the ground that his death was a spiritual necessity.

Here again time has vindicated his insight. It is the cross more than anything else that has been the dynamic of Christianity. Nor is there any unfathomable mystery in the fact that Jesus felt that his mission would culminate in the giving of his life for his gospel. That he must suffer was part of the price of victory, that he must die for the truth he had revealed was as inevitable as that that truth should ultimately prevail. No forced or artificial interpretation of the fact is called for. It was not God but man that murdered Jesus. The world being what it was, Jesus would have been sure to come to a cross of some kind unless he were to be saved by a miracle, which was precisely what he had decided against during his ordeal in the wilderness before he set out upon the work to which he then knew himself called.

More than once on subsequent occasions Jesus reverted to the warning uttered at Cæsarea Philippi. The apostles were now fully in his confidence as far as they were capable of being so. They knew his secret: he was the Messiah, but they were still unable to grasp how he could be the Messiah and the crucified victim of Jewish malice and Roman brutality. That was a mystery transcending their power to apprehend, and we cannot blame them for their incapacity. In their situation we should have been no wiser.

Jesus took his measures calmly and purposefully. He would not perish by the hand of an assassin nor as John had done after a period of incarceration in the dungeons of Herod Antipas; he would die in the capital and in sight of all. There was an occasion when in pursuance of this his fixed design he sought safety in flight, the only instance in which he is known to have entered foreign territory. Some of the Pharisees, perhaps with no very friendly intention, but desirous to get rid of him, came to him with the warning, "Get thee out, and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee," to which he gave the memorable

answer: "Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." In the sad irony of these words we have one more allusion to his approaching Passion and the manner of it. He protected himself for the time being by crossing the border into the heathen district of Tyre and Sidon, though not for long.

What he had planned to do was to reach Jerusalem in time for the Feast of the Passover, when more people would be gathered together within its precincts than at any other time. The route he took was through the large district called Peræa on the eastern side of Jordan, and the indications are that he remained there for some time teaching and preaching before recrossing the river at the entrance to the Dead Sea and making his way up through the plain of Jericho to the bold ridge of rock from which it was possible to look down on Jerusalem before entering the city.

That entrance was public and was arranged accordingly by Jesus himself. Never was anyone less theatrical in his methods nor more contemptuous of cheap popularity. His words and actions at various times show that he was able to estimate popular favour at its true value and knew how little dependence was to be placed on it. Renan, in his *Life of Jesus,* is certainly wrong in attributing to him any of the motives of a demagogue or any departure from his sublime conception of his mission. But on this occasion he felt it to be necessary by some overt act to draw the attention of his countrymen to what he stood for and all it meant. Now was the time to assert his Messiahship openly, and in such a manner as to constitute a challenge to all lesser ideals of the nature and function of God's representative on earth. He would bring things to an issue; he would pit pure spiritual force

against the combined resources of material might, cunning, hypocrisy, fanaticism, unscrupulous self-interest, envy, and hate—in a word, all that was represented by the spirit of the world in opposition to the revealed will of God.

If this were not what was in Jesus' mind at this fateful crisis, his conduct is entirely inexplicable. He had not the smallest intention of throwing himself on the support of the mob or of pandering to the desires of those who would have had him lead an insurrection against their Roman masters. Therefore the only thing to be done was what he did. He must assert his Messiahship in such a way as to make it the appeal of the righteous love of God to the hard and wayward heart of man. That in so doing he must prepare himself for the outward failure and ruin of his cause he knew full well, as we have seen; but his faith was that in virtue of that very fact, and not otherwise, the cause would ultimately prove victorious. God could not be worsted; in the long run evil could not be stronger than good, right would triumph over wrong.

It is too much to suppose that Jesus foresaw exactly and in detail how his final object was to be attained and his intrepid faith vindicated. That could hardly be without reducing the succession of events to a sort of drama with a preordained finish. He could not know, and did not know, any more than any prophet or pioneer ever knows, what course events would take or how he might expect to come into his own. That was hidden from him; all he could do at the moment was to follow the path he believed to be appointed for him and leave the future in the hands of his heavenly Father.

That some intimation of his design to enter Jerusalem publicly had preceded him there is more than likely, judging from what we read of it. Something approaching to organisation seems to have character-

ised his methods. First of all, he made a halt at Bethany on the Mount of Olives, two miles away from the city. He had friends there, as we know. Then he sent two messengers to Bethphage near by with the request that the owner of a young ass, on which no man had hitherto ridden, should lend the animal to him. According to the letter of the narrative, the ass was ready and waiting, and the owner only needed the formula, "The Lord hath need of him," in order to hand him over at once. Was this a signal? We cannot very well come to any other conclusion. There is no suggestion that the incident was miraculous; far more probably an arrangement had been entered into beforehand that when Jesus required the ass he should have him. Here is another instance of a private understanding existing between the master and certain unnamed adherents who were willing to serve him as he might direct.

The reason why Jesus wanted the ass is plain enough. He was deliberately drawing attention to a well-known Messianic prophecy (Zech. ix. 9): "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Many spectators might fail to see this at the moment, but they would be compelled to think of it afterwards when the news spread that the person behaving in this significant manner had confessed that he claimed to be the Messiah. There was another reason too. To enter the city in this way was to emphasise the peacefulness and unpretentiousness of the witness he bore; he sought no secular dominion; pride and vainglory had no attraction for him. The fourth gospel tells us that all this was realised later by the disciples of Jesus who took part in the enthusiastic welcome he received in the streets of Jerusalem that day.

The gospels state that multitudes of people took

palm branches in their hands and went forth to meet him. How did they know when he was coming? This could not have been accidental either. Had not the word gone round long before that Jesus might be expected by that route and would appear at a given time? Here were his disciples, thousands of them, from Galilee and Judæa and beyond Jordan—from every part of the country where he had taught and healed—here they were waiting to acclaim him at the centre of the nation's life. Some must have guessed his Messiahship, though not all did so. The very form of their shouted salutation is indicative of their belief that he was the hope and herald of a brighter day for Israel. "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

The present writer has seen crowds of villagers in festive attire, waiting in the Sahara desert with banners and green branches cut from oases, to welcome a famous marabout. The scene was strangely reminiscent of the New Testament account of the popular reception of Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem. The marabout did not come. It was learned afterwards that he had been held up by a flood that barred the progress of his caravan at the farther side of a distant line of hills. But for miles those children of the desert stood waiting for him—picturesque throngs in gay colours, topped with waving flags and foliage. The processions stretched well out into the desert, some of them far from human habitation. They knew in what direction to go and when. They waited long hours and in vain, but had it not been for the flood we visitors from civilisation would have had the privilege of witnessing just such an exuberant welcome to a religious teacher as that which met Jesus on the slopes of the Mount of Olives nineteen centuries ago.

Did this spontaneous outburst of popular feeling mean more than gratitude for the presence of a

divinely inspired teacher? It would appear so. We get a hint in the fourth gospel that some at least in that excited assemblage went so far as to salute Jesus as king of Israel. This was dangerous and was not forgotten by his enemies. "Master, rebuke thy disciples," cried some of the angry Pharisees who were looking on at the demonstration; and Jesus' reply was not such as to placate them: "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." So on went the rejoicings, the multitude in their enthusiasm throwing their outer garments and their palm branches in front of Jesus as he rode slowly through the gates and forward to the entrance of the Temple.

On the first day nothing more happened. He went into the Temple and noted with indignation the traffic that was being carried on in the outer courts thereof in money-changing and in birds and animals for sacrifice. This was one of the perquisites of the priestly order and had attained scandalous dimensions. In the evening he went out to Bethany with the apostles; apparently he had made his home here for the time being as the guest of his friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the last named of whom he is said to have raised from the dead. Returning to Jerusalem the next morning, he took the drastic action of turning all the dealers and money-changers out of the Temple, together with the objects of their traffic. He could not have issued a more direct challenge to the authorities nor assailed their interests more uncompromisingly; that he could do it with impunity and be obeyed by those concerned is evidence of his superlative moral force. For at least one whole day he remained master of the situation and taught within the Temple itself, the authorities helpless to prevent him.

But this could not last. Pharisees and Sadducees made common cause against him, the former because he had assailed their self-righteousness and the falsity

of their legalistic conceptions of religion, and the latter because of their worldliness and their degradation of the national worship. The Sadducees were the aristocratic party who had control of the Temple organisation, and to whose special advantage it was that the existing system should be maintained under Roman overlordship. These two parties had no love for each other, but both now hated and feared Jesus. They did not dare to seize him in public, but calculated rightly that if somehow they could get him into their power there would be no attempt at rescue. They must also find something whereof to accuse him which would be a sufficient cause for inducing the Roman Governor of Judæa to pass sentence of death upon him.

Both facilities were soon forthcoming. One of the inner circle of the followers of Jesus, Judas Iscariot, was bribed to conduct the Temple police to the master's place of retreat, where he was arrested under cover of darkness, carried first before the Jewish high priest, and then before the Roman procurator, condemned, and executed, as has already been described. The real betrayal, as Schweitzer and some other authorities maintain, was the secret of his Messiahship. That this was already rumoured we may be fairly sure, but it had not been openly acknowledged by Jesus himself. Judas, however, as one of the apostles, knew that he had asserted it privately, though the apostles had been asked not to speak of it to others. This information was now communicated to the chief priests, and Jesus was faced with it at the preliminary trial in the house of Caiaphas. Here, where the consequences of such an avowal would necessarily be fatal, Jesus boldly declared that he was indeed the Messiah and would yet be supernaturally manifested as such before the world. This confession was all they wanted in order to compass his destruction so far as Jewish orthodox opinion was concerned: it was accounted blasphemy. Before the Roman

Governor, as we have already seen, the charge was twisted into one of rebellion and aiming at nothing less than the throne of Israel. Pilate saw through the plot but could not ignore the accusation. To insult and show his contempt for those that brought it, he caused to be placed on the cross whereon Jesus suffered, the superscription: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Little did he who caused those words to be written, still less the venal priests who resented them, realise their everlasting truth. Jesus is the sovereign Jew, the greatest of his race, its supreme title to the respect of mankind. More than that, he is the flower of humanity. Few would dispute his right to that eminence. As Charles Lamb put it, if all the famous figures of history or any one of them were to appear before us, we should bare the head and stand; but if the Nazarene showed himself in our midst we should all kneel. "Art thou a king then?" asked Pilate brutally. "Thou sayest it because I am," was the reply. He is indeed a king, the King of all who have ever sought to enter the kingdom of heart's desire, and he reigns alone and unrivalled.

Did his heart fail him at the last? Did all his magnificent courage and faith go for nothing when the darkness closed down on him in his agony? There are those who say that it did, and that the cry of dereliction immediately before he drew his last breath, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is that of the tortured soul of man in presence of the stark and awful mystery of our life and death. There are those also who say that the silence that answered his solitary prayer in Gethsemane to be spared the cup of sorrow and shame was all that we, too, have to expect in the hour of doom.

But the facts speak otherwise. Not all the other moral forces of history put together have done what Jesus has done for men. He is risen, and in the in-

vincible power of his uprising is all our hope. The millions who have loved and believed in him since the glad news went forth on the first Easter morning have never thought of him as dead, but as the ever-living one whose life is the light of the world.

ADDENDUM

By courtesy of the editor the author is allowed to expand the section on the teaching of Jesus, which appears on p. 55.

Some readers may be perplexed by the statement that the primary purpose of Jesus was not that of expounding an ethical ideal, but rather of setting forth an objective which transcended all questions of right and wrong, good and ill, just and unjust as between man and man. The statement must not be understood as meaning that ethical values were regarded by him as of slight importance. That could not be so, for Jesus stood in the succession of the mighty Old Testament prophets, whose social gospel is to this day a living message, the enforcement of moral obligation in the treatment of one's fellow-man as being part of religious duty. Amos, thundering against the oppression of the poor, which was found consistent in the Israel of his day with elaborate religious ceremonial, cried: "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Jesus had evidently drunk of this fountain as his stern denunciations of similar practices by the religious leaders of his own time sufficiently bear witness. He is represented as quoting on two separate occasions, as a rebuke to the hard-heartedness of some members of the Pharisaic party, an utterance of the prophet Hosea. "Go ye," said he, "and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Nothing roused him to

anger so much as the ostentatious piety which went hand in hand with covetousness and injustice. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer." And on the positive side of his ethical teaching nothing could be plainer and simpler than the parable of the Good Samaritan and the application of the parable of the Last Judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

But, allowing all due weight to these considerations, we have still to recognise that the main emphasis of the teaching of Jesus was placed elsewhere. He put love to God before love to one's neighbour. The two cannot rightly be separated, but the pursuit of eternal values must come first. The modern world tends to reverse this order and to cite the teaching of Jesus as though it did so, too, which is the fundamental error of the humanitarianism of our time. As Dr. Rufus Jones puts it in his *Fundamental Ends of Life,* men live by two sets of ideals—the secondary, utilitarian, extrinsic, which look to results in this world or the next; and the primary, unalterable, intrinsic, which are their own reward. The two are not distinct; spirituality must include ethical fidelity; there can be no sanctity which ignores kindly everyday service to one's fellow-creatures; but the main object of Christian life is something far other and higher. "The most important philosophical issue of our time," says Dr. Rufus Jones, "is just this: whether values, the ideal values by which we live, are spun out of our own heads, dreams of our own imagining, or whether they are objectively real, universally valid, sprung from the eternal nature of things, and thus grounded in that spiritual Reality, from which the whole visible order of things has proceeded, and which makes them stabler than mountains and in perfect tally with 'the already known works of the Artist who sculptures the globes of the firmament

and writes the moral law.'" Dean Inge says much the same thing in his *Confessio Fidei*. "We are not able to picture to ourselves the eternal mode of existence, because we have experience only of the conditions which belong to souls on their probation; but there is no reason to doubt what our minds constantly affirm, that those values which are the objects of the soul's love and aspiration are the atmosphere which the perfected spirit breathes when it awakes after the likeness of its Maker, and enjoys his presence for ever."

The author's thanks are due to one of the foremost of living authorities on the subject of Christian origins, Dr. R. H. Charles, Archdeacon of Westminster, who kindly read the chapter on the teaching of Jesus, in page proof. Dr. Charles agrees with the view that Jesus' primary object was as stated on p. 55, but holds that the ethical motive therein was ever well in view. As regards what is said on the subject of the Fatherhood of God on p. 55, Dr. Charles remarks that even in modern Jewish liturgies the term "Father" as applied to God is but sparingly used.

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